



**Certified Access Specialist Program**

**Staff Report 3.1**

**CERTIFICATION CLASSIFICATIONS**

**June 30, 2004**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The State Architect requests that the Implementation Committee of the Certified Access Specialist Program (CAsp) review and comment on development of three distinct classifications of certification. Creation of multiple classifications will provide flexibility to tailor subsequent certification criteria to identified functional needs.

Initial committee discussions took place on May 11, 2004. The discussion revealed an increasingly unified desire to create new professional roles for access specialists, with the intention of addressing longstanding problems in realizing complete access to the built environment. Nonetheless, initial development of the CAsp program needs to proceed unencumbered in order to meet legislative deadlines. This timely start also certifies a critical mass of professionals that may begin, as soon as possible, to clarify and facilitate universal design principles for the majority of program stakeholders.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The State Architect seeks review and comments on his recommendation to develop three certification classifications for immediate implementation:

1. Access Design and Survey Specialist
2. Access Plan Review Specialist
3. Access Inspection Specialist

## **BACKGROUND**

Senate Bill 262 (Chapter 873, Statutes of 2003) requires the State Architect to establish a program to certify access specialists. However, the bill does not specify professional roles and duties for access specialists and leaves the professional scope of work to be determined by the State Architect.

At the May 11, 2004, Certified Access Specialist Program (CASp) committee meeting, The Division of the State Architect (DSA) presented the possible activities for recognition as part of the professional scope for a certified access specialist. DSA also presented a second report to initiate discussion of certification criteria. Committee member, James Abrams, verbally introduced, and later drafted a written motion on the minimum requirements needed to become a certified access specialist. The motion, not yet reviewed or approved by the committee, is included as part of the April 13, 2004 meeting minutes. DSA considered Mr. Abram's motion when developing Staff Report 3.2, *Performance Expectations*.

Previously, DSA considered offering certification at two competency levels (junior and senior) within each classification. However, at this point in program development, a programmatic need to distinguish between levels of competency has not been identified. DSA therefore does not recommend distinguishing levels for the proposed classifications.

## **DESIGNATED CLASSIFICATIONS**

The State Architect has identified five certification classifications. Specific functions include:

1. **Access Design and Survey Specialist**
  - a. collaborate, in the capacity of consultant to the architect of record, to design accessible features;
  - b. survey existing facilities for compliance; and
  - c. report on compliance with access requirements, including those set forth in the California Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.
2. **Access Plan Review Specialist**
  - a. review plans and specifications;
  - b. determine whether the construction proposed pursuant to them comply fully with all applicable accessibility-related building standards and requirements, including those set forth in the California Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines; and
  - c. report on compliance findings.

**3. Access Inspection Specialist**

- a. verify compliance of completed construction with accessibility requirements, including those set forth in the California Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines; and
- b. facilitate the enforcement agency's corrective process.

**4. Access of Disability Rights Specialist**

- a. perform various activities that facilitate the assertion of disability rights. Activities may include, but not be limited to acting as an ombudsperson on behalf of people who believe they have been denied access to a facility; or the monitoring of corrective work specified in stipulated court judgments.

**5. ADA Coordinator**

- a. includes, but is not limited to, roles that identify program accessibility needs, develop transition plans to resolve issues and remove barriers, establishing procedures to complete plans and coordinate related process.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- I. The State Architect recommends the development of three classifications of certification:

1. Access Design and Survey Specialists
2. Access Plan Review Specialists
3. Access Inspection Specialists

Review and Inspection classifications are similar to those for existing certification programs and implementation should be straightforward. Establishing Certified Access Design Specialists would allow DSA to properly certify specialists who are competent in Universal Design. DSA envisions Access Design and Survey Specialists as essential members of project design teams, effectively contributing in such a way as to produce construction documents that completely address accessibility requirements at the time they are first submitted for review.

- II. Further, the State Architect recommends development of specialist certifications for Disability Rights Specialist and ADA Coordinator only after initial certification lists are established for the three categories identified in the first recommendation.